

Charter of Connecticut – 1662

Historical Background of Document:

In 1662, King Charles II of England issued a charter designed to unite two separate Connecticut settlements. The New Haven Colony had been governed by the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut of 1638-39, but there was a separate settlement on the Connecticut River and the eastern shoreline who had no official governing document of their own. Up until 1662, this settlement had voluntarily governed themselves under the Fundamental Orders. Thus, with this charter, both settlements were officially combined into one united civil body.

Text of Document:

CHARLES the Second, by the Grace of GOD, KING of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting.

Whereas by the several Navigations, Discoveries, and Successful Plantations of divers of Our loving Subjects of this Our Realm of England, several lands, Islands, Places, Colonies, and Plantations have been obtained and settled in that Part of the Continent of America called New-England, and thereby the Trade and Commerce there, hath been of late Years much increased: And whereas We have been informed by the hirable Petition of our Trusty and Well beloved John Winthrop, John Mason, Samuel Wyllys, Henry Clarke, Matthew Allyn, John Tapping, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Wolcott, John Talcott, Daniel Clarke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming, and Matthew Camfeild, being Persons principally interested in Our Colony or Plantation of Connecticut, in NewEngland, that the same Colony, or the greatest part thereof, was Purchased and obtained for great and valuable Considerations, and some other Part thereof gained by Conquest, and with touch difficulty, and at the only Endeavors, Cadence, and Charges of theirs and their Associates, arced those under whom they Claim, Subdued, and Improved, and thereby become a considerable Enlargement and Addition of Our Dominions and Interest there. Now Know YE, That in consideration thereof, and in Regard the said Colony is remote from other the English Plantations in the places aforesaid, and to the End the Affairs and Business which shall from Time to Time happen or arise concerning the same, may be duly Ordered and Managed, we have thought fit, and at the humble Petition of the Persons aforesaid, and are graciously Pleased to create and make them a Body Politicly and Corporate, with the Powers and Privileges herein after mentioned; and

accordingly Our Will and Pleasure is, and of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge, and meer Motion, We have ordained, constituted and declared, and by these presents, for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, Do ordain, constitute and declare, that they the said John Winthrop, John Mason, Samuel Wyllys, Henry Clarke, Matthew Allyn, John Tapping, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard lord, Henry Wolcott, John Talcott, Daniel Clarke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Bowed, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming, and Matthew Camfeild, and all such others as now are, or hereafter shall be admitted and made free of the Company and Society of Our Colony of Connecticut, in America, shall from Time to Time, and for ever hereafter, be One Body Corporate and politique, in Fact and Name, by the Name of, Governor and Company of the English colony of Connecticut in New-England, in America;

And that by the same Name they and their Successors shall and may have perpetual Succession, and shall and may be Persons able and capable in the Law, to plead and be impleaded, to answer and to be answered unto, to defend and be defended in all and singular Suits, Causes, Quarrels, Matters, Actions, and Things, of what Kind or Nature soever; and also to have, take, possess, acquire, and purchase Lands, Tenements, or Hereditaments, or any Goods or Chattels, and the same to lease, grant, demise, alien, bargain, sell, and dispose of, as other Our liege People of this Our Realm of England, or any other Corporation or Body Politique within the same may lawfully do. And further, That the said Governor and Company, and their Successors shall and may forever hereafter have a common Seal, to serve and use for all Causes, Matters, Things, and affairs whatsoever, of them and their Successors, and the same Seal, to alter, change, break and make new from Time to Time, at their Wills and Pleasures, as they shall think fit. And further, We will and ordain, and by these Presents, forms, our Heirs and Successors, do declare and appoint, that for the better ordering and managing of the Affairs and Business of the said Company and their Successors, there shall be One Governor, One Deputy-Governor, and Twelve Assistants, to be from time to Time constituted, elected and chosen out of the Freemen of the said Company for the Time being, in such Manner and Form as hereafter in these Presents is expressed, which said Officers shall apply themselves to take Care for the best disposing and ordering of the general Business and all airs of and concerning the Land and Hereditaments herein after mentioned to- be granted, and the Plantation thereof, and the Government of the People thereof: And for the better Execution of Our Royal Pleasure herein, We do for Us, Our Heirs, and Successors, assign, name, constitute and appoint the aforesaid John Winthrop to be the first and present Governor of the said Company, and the said John Mason, to be the Deputy-Governor, and the said Samuel Wyllys, Matthew Allyn, Nathan Gold, Henry Clerke, Richard Treat, John Ogden, John Tapping, John Talcott, Thomas Wells, Henry Wolcott, Richard Lord, and Daniel Clerke, to be the Twelve present assistants of the said

Company, to continue in the said several Offices respectively, until the second Thursday which shall be in the Month of October now next coming. And further we Will, and by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs, and Successors, Do ordain and grant, That the Governor of the said Company for the Time being, or in his Absence by occasion of Sickness, or otherwise by his Leave or Permission, the Deputy-Governor for the Time being, shall and may from Time to Time upon all Occasions, give Order for the assembling of the said Company, and calling them together to consult and advise of the Business and Affairs of the said Company, and that for ever hereafter, twice in every Year, That is to say, On every Second Thursday in October, and on every Second Thursday in May, or oftener in case it shall be requisite; the Assistants, and Freemen of the said Company, or such of them (not exceeding Two Persons from each Place, Town, or City) who shall be from Time to Time "hereunto elected or deputed by the major Part of the Freemen of the respective Towns, Cities, and Places for which they shall be elected or deputed, shall have a General Meeting or Assembly, then and there to consult and advise in and about the Affairs and Business of the said Company: and that the Governor, or in his Absence the Deputy-Governor of the said Company for the Time being, and such of the Assistants and Freemen of the said Company as shall be so elected or deputed, and be present at such Meeting or Assembly, or the greatest Number of them, whereof the Governor or Deputy-Governor, and Six of the Assistants at least, to be Seven, shall be called the General Assembly, and shall have full Power and authority to alter-and change their Days and Times of Meeting, or General-Assemblies, for electing the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants, other Officers or any other Courts, Assemblies or Meetings, and to choose, nominate and appoint such and so many other Persons as they shall; and shall be willing to accept the same, to be Free of the said Company and Body Politique, and them into the same to admit; And to elect and constitute such Officers as they shall think fit and requisite for the ordering, managing and disposing of the Affairs of the said Governor and Company, and their Successors:

And we do hereby for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, establish and ordain, That once in the Year for ever hereafter, Namely, the said Second Thursday in May, the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants of the said Company, and other Officers of the said Company, or such of them as the said General Assembly shall thinly fit, shall be in the said General Court and Assembly to be held from that Day or Time, newly chosen for the Year ensuing, by such greater Part of the said Company for the Time being, then and there present; and if the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants by these Presents appointed, or such as hereafter be newly chosen into their Rooms, or any of them, or any other the Officers to be appointed for the said Company shall die, or be removed from his or their several Offices or Places before the said general Day of Election, whom We do hereby declare for any Misdemeanor or Default, to be removable by the Governor,

Assistants, and Company, or such greater Part of them in any of the said public Courts to be assembled, as is aforesaid, that then and in every such Case, it shall and may be lawful to and for the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants, and Company aforesaid, or such greater Part of them so to be assembled, as is aforesaid, in any of their Assemblies, to proceed to a new Election of one or more of their Company, in the Room or Place, Rooms or Places of such Governor, Deputy-Governor, Assistant, or other Officer or Officers so dying or removed, according to their Discretions, and immediately upon and after such Election or Elections made of such Governor, Deputy-Governor, Assistant or Assistants,- or any other Officer of the said Company, in Manner and Form aforesaid, the Authority, Office and Power before given to the former Governor, Deputy-Governor, or other Officer and Officers so removed, in whose Stead and Place new shall be chosen, shall as to him and them, and every of them respectively, cease and determine.

Provided also, And Our Will and Pleasure is, That as well such as are by these Presents appointed to be the present Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants of the said Company, as those that shall succeed them, and all other Officers to be appointed and chosen, as aforesaid, shall before they undertake the Execution of their said Offices and Places respectively, take their several and respective corporal Oaths for the due and faithful Performance of their Duties, in their several Offices and Places, before such Person or Persons as are by these Presents hereafter appointed to take and receive the same; That is to say, The said John Winthrop, who is herein before nominated and appointed the present Governor of the said Company, shall take the said Oath before One or more of the Masters of Our Court of Chancery for the Time being, unto which Master of Chancery, We do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to administer the Oath to the said John Winthrop accordingly: And the said John Mason, who is herein before nominated and appointed the present Deputy-Governor of the said Company, shall take Math before the said John Winthrop, or any Two of the Assistants of the said Company, unto whom We do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to administer the said Oath to the said John Mason accordingly: And the said Saqnnel Wyllys, Henry Clerice, Matthew Allyn, John Tapping, Nathan Cold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Wolcott, John Talcott, Daniel Clerke, John Ogden, and Thomas Wells, who are herein before nominated and appointed the present Assistants of the said Company, shall take the Oath before the said John Winthrop, and John Mason, or One of them, to whom We do hereby give full Power and Authority to administer the same accordingly.

And Our further Will and Pleasure is, that all and every Governor, or Deputy-Governor to be elected and chosen by Virtue of these Presents, shall take the said Oath before Two or more of the Assistants of the said Company for the Time being, unto

whom We do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to give and administer the said Oath accordingly; and the said Assistants, and every of them, and all and every other Officer or Officers to be here after chosen from Time to Time, to take the said Oath before the Governor, or Deputy-Governor for the Time being, unto which Governor, or Deputy-Governor, We do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to administer the same accordingly. And further, Of Our more ample Grace, certain Knowledge, and meer Motion, We have given and granted, and by these presents for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, do give and grant unto the said Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut, in New England, in America, and to every Inhabitant there, and to every Person and Persons trading thither, and to every such Person and Persons as are or shall be Free of the said Colony, full Power and Authority from Time to Time, and at all Times hereafter, to take Ship, Transport and carry away for and towards the Plantation and Defence of the said Colony, such of Our loving Subjects and Strangers, as shall or will willingly accompany them in, and to their said Colony and Plantation, except such Person and Persons as are or shall be therein restrained by Us, Our Heirs and Successors; and also to ship and transport all, and all Manner of Goods, Chattels, Merchandises, and other Things whatsoever that are or shall be useful or necessary for the Inhabitants of the said Colony, and may lawfully be transported thither; Nevertheless, not to be discharged of Payment to Us, our Heirs and Successors, of the Duties, Customs and Subsidies which are or ought to be paid or payable for the same.

And further, Our Will and Pleasure is, and We do for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, ordain, declare, and grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their Successors, That all, and every the Subjects of Us, Our Heirs, or Successors, which shall go to inhabit within the said Colony, and every of their Children, which shall happen to be born there, or on the Seas in going thither, or returning from thence, shall have and enjoy all Liberties and Immunities of free Did natural Subjects within any the Dominions of US, Our Heirs or Successors, to all Intents, Constructions and Purposes whatsoever, as if the they and every of them were born within the realm of England; And We do authorize and empower the Governor or in his Absence the Deputy governor for the Time being, to appoint Two or more of the said Assistants at any of their Courts or Assemblies to be held as aforesaid, to have Power and Authority to administer the Oath of Supremacy and Obedience to all and every Person or Persons which shall at any Time or Times hereafter go or pass into the said Colony of Connecticut, unto which said Assistants so to be appointed as aforesaid We do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to administer the said Oath accordingly. And We do further of Our especial Grace, certain Knowledge: and meer Motion, give, and grant unto the said Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut, in New-England, in America, and their Successors, That it shall and may be lawful to and for the Governor, or Deputy-Governor, and such of

the Assistants of the said Company for the Time being as shall be assembled in any of the General Courts aforesaid, or in any Courts to be especially summoned or assembled for that Purpose, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor, or Deputy-Governor, and Six of the Assistants to be always Seven, to erect and make such Judicatories, for the hearing, and determining of all Actions, Causes, Matters, and Things happening within the said Colony, or Plantation, and which shall be in Dispute, and Depending there, as they shall think Fit, and Convenient, and also from Time to Time to Make, Ordain, and Establish all manner of wholesome, and reasonable Laws Statutes, Ordinances, Directions, and Instructions, not Contrary to the Laws of this Realm of England, as well for settling the Forms, and Ceremonies of Government, and Magistracy, fit and necessary for the said Plantation, and the Inhabitants there, as for Naming, and Stiling all Sorts of Officers, both Superior and Inferior, which they shall find Needful for the Government, and Plantation of the said Colony, and the distinguishing and setting forth of the several Duties, Powers, and Limits of every such Office and Place, and the Forms of such Oaths not being contrary to the Laws and Statutes of this Our Realm of England, to be administered for the Execution of the said several Offices and Places as also for the disposing and ordering of the Election of such of the said Officers as are to be annually chosen, and of such others as shall succeed in case of Death or Removal, and administring the said Oath to the newly-elected Officers, and granting necessary Commissions, and for Imposition of lawful Fines, Mulcts. Imprisonment or other Punishment upon Offenders and Delinquents according to the Curse of other Corporations within this our Kingdom of England, and the same Laws, Fines, Mulcts and Executions, to alter, change, revoke, annul, release, or pardon under their Common Seal, as by the said General Assembly, or the major Part of them shall be thought fit, and for the directing, ruling and disposing of all other Matters and things, whereby Our said People Inhabitants there, may be so religiously, peaceably and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderly Conversation may win and invite the Natives of the Country to the Knowledge and Obedience of the only true GOD, and He Saviour of Mankind, and the Christian Faith, which in Our Royal Intentions, and the adventurers free Possession, is the only and principal End of this Plantation; willing, commanding and requiring, and by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, ordaining and appointing, that all such Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, Instructions, Impositions and Directions as shall be so made by the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Assistants as aforesaid, and published in Writing under their Common Seal, shall carefully and duly be observed, kept, performed, and put in Execution, according to the true Intent and Meaning of The same, and these Our Letters Patents, or the Duplicate, or Exemplification thereof, shall be to all and every such Officers, Superiors and Inferiors from Time to Time, for the putting of the same Orders, Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, Instructions, and Directions in due Execution, against Us, Our Heirs and Successors, a sufficient Warrant and Discharge.

And We do further for US, Our Heirs and Successors, give and grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their Successors, by these Presents, That it shall and may be lawful to, and for the Chief Commanders, Governors and Officers of the said Company for the Time being, who shall be resident in the Parts of New-England hereafter mentioned, and others inhabiting there, by their Leave, Admittance Appointment, or Direction, from Time to Time, and at All Times hereafter, for their special Defence and Safety, to Assemble, Martial-Array, and put in warlike Posture the Inhabitants of the said Colony, and to Commissionate, Impower, and Authorize such Person or Persons as they shall think fit, to lead and conduct the said Inhabitants, and to encounter, expulse, repel and resist by Force of Arms, as well by Sea as by Land, and also to kill, slay, and destroy by all fitting Ways Enterprises, and Means whatsoever, all and every such Person or Persons as shall at any Time hereafter attempt or enterprise the Destruction, Invasion, Detriment, or Annoyance of the said Inhabitants or Plantation, and to use and exercise the Law Martial in such Cases only as Occasion shall require; and to take or surprize by all Ways and Means whatsoever, all and every such Person and Persons, with their Ships' Armour, Ammunition and other Goods of such as shall in such hostile Manner invade or attempt the defeating of the said Plantation, or the hurt of the said Company and Inhabitants, and upon just Causes to invade and destroy the Natives, or other Enemies of the said Colony. Nevertheless; Our Will and Pleasure is, and We do hereby declare unto all Christian Kings, Princes, and States, that if any Persons which shall hereafter lie of the said Company or Plantation, or any other by Appointment of the said Governor and Company for the Time being, shall at any Time or Times hereafter rob or spoil by Sea or by Land, and do any Hurt, Violence, or unlawful Hostility to any of the Subjects of Us, Our Heirs or Successors, or any of the Subjects of any Prince or State, being then in League with Us, Our Heirs or Successors, upon Complaint of such Injury done to any such Prince or State, or their Subjects, We, Our Heirs and Successors will make open Proclamation within any Parts of Our Realm of England fit for that Purpose, thin the Person or Persons committing any such Robbery or Spoil, shall within the Time limited by such Proclamation, make full Restitution or Satisfaction of all such Injuries Lone or committed, so as the Said Prince, or others so complaining may be fully satisfied and contented; and if the said Person or Persons who shall commit any such Robbery or Spoil shall not make Satisfaction accordingly, within such Time so to be limited, that then it shall and may be lawful for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, to put such Person or Persons out of (whir Allegiance and Protection; and that it shall and may be lawful and free for all Princes or others to prosecute with Hostility such Offenders, and every of them, their, and every of their Procurers, Aiders, Abettors and Counsellors in that Behalf.

Provided also, and Our express Will and Pleasure is, and We do by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs; and Successors, Ordain and Appoint, that these Presents shall not in any

Manner hinder any of Our loving Subjects whatsoever to use and exercise the Trade of Fishing upon the Coast of New-England, in America, but they and every or any of them shall have full and free Power and Liberty, to continue, and use the said Trade of Fishing upon the said Coast, in any of the Seas thereunto adjoining, or any Arms of the Seas, or Salt Water Rivers where they have been accustomed to fish, and to build and set up on the waste Land belonging to the said Colony of Connecticut, such Wharves, Stages, and Work-Houses as shall be necessary for the salting, drying, and keeping of their Fish to be taken, or gotten upon that Coast, any Thing in these Presents contained to the contrary notwithstanding. And Know Ye further, That We, of Our abundant Grace, certain Knowledge, and mere Motion, have given, granted, and confirmed, and by these Presents for Us, our Heirs and Successors, do give, grant and confirm unto the said Governor and Company, and their Successors, all that Part of Our Dominions in New-England in America, bounded on the East by Narraganset-River, commonly called Narraganset-Bay, where the said River falleth into the Sea; and on the North by the Line of the If Massachusetts-Plantation; and on the South by the Sea; and in Longitude as the Line of the Massachusetts-Colony, running from East to West, That is to say, From the said Narraganset-Bay on the East, to the South Sea on the West Part, with the Islands thereunto adjoining, together with all firm Lands, Soils, Grounds, Havens, Ports, Rivers, Waters, Dishings, Mines, Minerals, precious Stones, Quarries, and all and singular other Commodities, Jurisdictions, Royalties, Privileges, Franchises, Preheminences, and Hereditaments whatsoever, within the said Tract, Bounds, Lands, and Islands aforesaid, or to them or any of them belonging. To have and to hold the same unto the said Governor and Company, their Successors and Assigns for ever, upon Trust, and for the Use and Benefit of Themselves and their Associates, Freemen of the said Colony, their Heirs and Assigns, to be holden of Its, Our Heirs and Successors, as of Our Manor of East-Greenwich, in free and common Soccage, and not in Capite, nor by Knights Service, yielding and paying therefore to Us, Our Heirs and Successors, only the Fifth Part of all the Ore of Gold add Silver which from Time to Time, and at all Times hereafter, shall be there gotten, had, or obtained, in Lieu of all Services, Duties, and Demands whatsoever, to be to Us, our Heirs, or Successors therefore, or thereout rendered, made, or paid.

And lastly, We do for Us, our Heirs and Successors, grant to the said Governor and Company, and their Successors, by these Presents, That these Our Letters Patents, shall be firm, good and effectual in the Law, to all Intents, Constructions, and Purposes whatsoever according to Our true Intent and Meaning herein before declared, as shall be construed, reputed and adjudged most favourable on the Behalf, and for the best Benefit, and Behoof of the said Governor and Company, and their Successors, although express Mention of the true Yearly Value or Certainty of the Premises, or of any of them, or of any other Gifts or Grants by Us, or by any of Our Progenitors, or Predecessors, heretofore

made to the said Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut, in New-England, in America, aforesaid, in these Presents is not made, or any Statute, Act, Ordinance, Provision, Proclamation, or Restriction heretofore had, made, enacted, ordained, or provided, or any other Matter, Cause, or Thing whatsoever, to the contrary thereof, in any wise notwithstanding. In Witness whereof, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patents. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Three and Twentieth Day of April, in the Fourteenth Year of our Reign.

By Writ of Privy Seal,

HOWARD